

## LOBBYING WORKS OF ART

Pictures and Statues Must Have Congressional Friends.

### LAWMAKERS AS CRITICS

Between Committees Which Order and Committees Which Pay, the Poor Artist Has Often Had a Hard Row to Hoe—Little Dancers Sometimes Play an Important Part.

The American citizen from the back districts who wanders into the Capitol and with the help of a guide views its splendors, hears with open mouth and slow comprehension that the gigantic pile cost \$15,000,000.

He understands it a little better when he learns that the pictures and statues are valued at a good deal more than half a million, but still marvels at this immense sum laid out to what to him are inconsequential trimmings. It is true the breadth of canvas tends to take the eye off his surprise at the cost of the pictures. They form the smaller-thing of the expenses for art work, aggregating only about \$200,000.

The traveled man of the world from one of the great cities is astonished when he takes a good square look at the art treasures of the Capitol for the first time after a visit to the great galleries, churches and collections of Europe, but it is for quite another cause.

He wonders at the general mediocrity of the pictures, but he is not so sure when he sees a sample of what America can do in the way of art. He is a good deal astonished, if it falls to his lot to show the place to any foreigner who has had an opportunity to look around a little before coming over here. He does not pause with him to dwell upon more than two or three of the great paintings, unless he is specially requested by his guest, who is interested to point out the shortcomings of the work. But he comes to marvel at the poor quality with which the pictures are considered the kinds of means frequently adopted to secure a sale to the government. The Washingtonian, probably, will go over the pictures with his visiting friend in a perfunctory way. He may try to recall and interpret what he has seen, but he will probably forget what he is saying very soon. For why should he remember it? Has he not the picture at hand whenever he wishes to see it?

### HOW THE PICTURES WERE BOUGHT.

The purchase of the paintings has covered a period from the very days of the republic down to the present, and the circumstances have been of the most diverse nature. The bargain of many has been made at the faintest chance of favor or worse, and the work has stood solely on its merits, but in the majority of cases there has been some sort of influence, and good natured bribery brought to bear, if nothing more blameworthy.

A story from far back in the days of Thomas Jefferson in the White House will serve to illustrate what is meant. It was then that an artist was selling to the government some of the great canvases which now adorn the rotunda. It is usual to think of the fathers as quite above criticism, but the side lights that have been let in by James Parton and others have tended to give credence to reports never easy to authenticate, but still based about as well grounded tradition among the older sets at the Capitol.

There were no Harveys, Chamberlains, Pages, Sheridans, Raleighs or Willards at that time. The number of Congressmen was much smaller and the examination necessary to "lobby" through a bill was much less complicated than now.

The artist had very nearly secured the passage of the appropriation for his works. There was a pretty easy majority for him in the Senate, but he could not get so confident of the House. Even at that early date the Senate had begun to feel a superior polish and refinement and to assume more interest in art and literature. The lack of wisdom, who in part constituted the membership of the more numerous branch, made no pretensions whatever to understanding or caring for such things.

Some of them were openly boastful of their ignorance. But these gentlemen then, as their followers now, were susceptible to certain delicate attentions when skillfully manipulated. It is not necessary to assume that bold offers of money were made for the delivery of votes. But, as now, corporations in need of protection or help, will, by social influences, make it very difficult for the rampant country or labor member to fight them, so the artist or contractor then won over the hardy backwoodsman.

**VOTES WON BY A GOOD DINNER.** It was necessary for the artist to have the help of an unscrupulous representative from a State in the then far West. The gentleman knew nothing about pictures, but he had a mother who and a daughter that made him the leader of a coterie of a score of members who represented constituencies similar to his own. They would vote upon such a matter precisely as he voted.

They stood in that day near the northern shore of Capitol Hill a body that was a fore-runner of the famous corps of the '40s, of the war-time, and one of the present. The proprietor was the worthy of his generation. Here the artist, through a Senator who was cultivated in his case, gave a grand dinner.

There was excellent turtle soup, and oysters of flavor and fatness rarely met the blue points, though that name was little known here then. There was Westphalia ham and nicely prepared hog and lamb to take off the edge of the spender and make the guests feel at home.

With highly spiced relishes to begin with and the coffee served in delicate china imported from France, together with some rare vintage of the Widow Clignet to end with, each all good things in abundance, with cut glass and heavy and beautiful wrought silver of the old style, with fine cigars and excellent Virginia leaf in profusion and a high game of cards to close the evening, all the members of that particular circle except a few whose shrewdness in suspecting purpose and the artist's all-around feast. Then when all were full of good things and happy, the work was done.

Did the Senator in charge of the maneuver have a man posted for each of the votes he was owed? Not at all. But in the nick of time, when paring with his guest friend, the leader of the set, he fell to talking of legislation. And just casually, you know, he mentioned that the bill for the special appropriation for the paintings would come up next day, and by a neatly turned compliment he caught his guest, already well disposed by his comfortable feed.

It was simply impossible to resist. The promise of support was given. The thing was done. Next day skillful tongues made known that Representative Blank would vote for the bill for the pictures. Inquiry by doubters of his change confirmed the report. When the right moment came they followed the lead of the new champion almost to a man.

## The Art of Living.

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"Let me try to get our breakfast," she ventured to suggest one day. "Now don't frown so. I would just love it, and I'm sure it would be cheaper," I protested, but finally consented to allow her to try just one. We bought a little gas and a few cooking utensils. I improvised a table out of a screen.

Breakfast appeared in due time and I was charmed. She begged to try it a week and we found two dollars paid the bill. Then my wife, whose ruling passion was for calculating, began to figure. After a half hour of fussing and frowning she triumphantly announced that we could save about ten dollars a month by preparing our own breakfasts. "And they are so much better," she added by way of argument, which, indeed, was true.

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The art of living! What a momentous question for the submerged tenth of humanity! Nay, is it not the problem paramount for a much larger fraction? Seneca once said, "If you live according to the dictates of nature, you will never be poor, if according to the world's caprice, you will never be rich."

But this ancient philosopher was rich "according to the world's caprice," and it is so easy to engage in platitudes and ambiguous axioms upon the art of living if your pen is good, and your pen full and the ladder always well stocked.

"Live within your income," sentimentally exclaims some sophist. But suppose your income talks and refuses to come in? "In that case," pipes in some simpleton, "live on credit." So when the ten-dollar bill into a twenty-dollar receipt, "Then hustle for the extra tenner," another wisecracker ironically remarks, "Oh, certainly, that's easy enough," replies the hard-boiled individual, sarcastically, "I never thought of that. Thank you, ever so much. I'll just close my office and walk down street. Doubtless I'll find it around the corner. Ten-dollar bills are often lying around loose, begging some one to claim them."

The young professional man can't take it in washing or do mending. I know of one who took in typewriting. That was several years ago. He is taking in typewriting yet. I knew of another, a lawyer, who thought he could combine a private secretarial practice with his practice. He is private secretary yet, and has abandoned all hope of obtaining a law practice.

No, stick to your profession exclusively. If, of